

Travel Intention and Behaviour Role of Social Media in Tourism on Millennials in Madhya Pradesh

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Abstract: Emerging internet technologies and smart phone penetration have transformed the marketing communication in tourism industry. Social media has enabled tourists to search, share and co-create tourism related content making it as one of the most potential source to plan, organize and fulfil their expectations. Purpose: This paper aims to explore the role of social media on tourists' intention to visit tourism destinations in Madhya Pradesh among millennial. Design: The research is a quantitative study that relies on structured questionnaire for collecting responses from tourists and analysis of the same was conducted using descriptive techniques and anova. Findings: The key findings reveal a strong positive influence of social media on decision making and travel behaviour to gather and share tourism information and experiences on social networks resulting into greater engagement and retention. The study aims to facilitate destination marketing communications on digital networks for enhanced branding and customer experience. Originality: The study explores new paradigms of destination marketing communication by means of relevant user generated content on targeted group.

1 INTRODUCTION

Social Media in yester years have significantly changed the arena in tourism marketing. According to United Nations World Tourism Organization reports (2012) there is a surge of more than 300 % among travellers who have begun using social media for searching travel destinations , its where about and gathering information. India rising to second position in terms of social media users with more 755 million active users just after China as per Statista has connected modern travellers with the tourism suppliers and managers during the process sharing their experience (Gretzel et al., 2015). Smart phones and easy access to information has redesigned the complex relationship between tourism destination organizations and tourists who are in constant need of information during their travel experience (Buhalis, 2019). Increased penetration of internet have leveraged growth of social media as an interactive platform for real time communication on travel planning, decision making and sharing experience during or post trip (Bg & Skills, 2020). Most of the tourists' marketing organization including government have adopted social media apart from interactive websites for making use of user generated

content (likes, share, tagging, blogging, reviews, reels, pictures or video stories) as a marketing component to transform their travel experience. (Srinivaasan & Kumar Kabia, n.d.) strongly advocated smart phones are an integral part of destination marketing emphasizing their role as travel companion throughout their journey from seeking information, planning to sharing their experience on online space having a strong influence on decision making. (Gupta, 2022) pointed the social media as an efficient and cost effective informational tool for reaching out to customers and addressing changing consumer behaviour and interactions. In order to be competitive destination managers and organizations must engage in strategic use of social media for communication and meeting their expectations. Thus it supplements the need to study role of social media as a critical marketing component to ascertain travel motivations and behaviour of millennial population in Madhya Pradesh for tourism.

1.1 Literature Review

Digital technologies and social media with the widespread use of internet and increased penetration of smart phones have facilitated more interactive and

engaging marketing communication converging the two disciplines for more effectiveness. (Gvaramadze, 2022a) Travel behaviour and motivation have been widely researched to identify the factors inspiring travel, planning tourism activities, attitude of tourists or else subjected to several internal or external factors with mediating effect of destination marketing and image (Cohen et al., 2014). Understanding travel behaviour and motivations is strategic to increase tourism demand and policy formulation using digital media like websites, social media or else to build competitive advantage with development of new business models integrating information sharing, co-creation and dissemination (Vuuren & Slabbert, 2011).

Social media engagement, tourism websites and other virtual networks are most reliable source of information that explains use of digital communication mix by government and other destination marketing organizations in recent times (Chatterjee & Dsilva, 2021). Facebook, Youtube, Instagram and other online content sharing websites are looked forward as highly relevant and influential on consumer decision making, choice of destination, tourism activity and travel behaviour. Social media has primarily altered travel behaviour of consumers with increased access to technology from Generation Y or Z who seek information through travel blogs or reviews during all stages of travel, unlike friends or relatives as traditional source of information to unfamiliar destinations (Werenowska, 2020) (Java et al., 2014). Recent studies have made a calibrated effort to dig deeper into understanding the conceptual framework of personality, attitude and expectations of consumer with relation to technology, sustainability and decision making. Previous studies conducted on Georgian university students or Polish target groups show a clear evidence of use of social media handles on smart phones to identify destinations, attractions or amenities that influence their decision making and expectations during all stages of travel buying (Gvaramadze, 2022b) (Bora & Sahu, 2022). Quantitative and qualitative account of literature and digitally administered surveys evident social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook and Instagram as top rated mediums used by travellers sharing reviews, videos or images seeking to collaborate on virtual networks as cost effective and time efficient tool (Chourasia, 2018) (Java et al., 2014). Digital engaging mediums have attracted young travellers to wildlife destinations with interactive and promotional content (reviews, images, videos, stories etc.) on shared platforms to fill the current gap in expectations. Social networks has

increased awareness on environment sustainability and raising living standard of the community with nature based tourism apart from adding stickiness and reduced dependency on traditional systems. Ministry of tourism and government of India and several states like Assam, Odisha, Goa, Madhya Pradesh to name a few has recognized the competence of social networks for collaborative value addition and sustainable development from nature based tourism designing strategic campaigns and adjunct resources (Gohil, 2015) (Jayanna, 2019).

2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The research is an ongoing study part of research thesis which will further quantitatively analyse the influence of social media in promoting tourism in Madhya Pradesh. It will give insights on active social media platforms and influence of social media engagement on motivation and behaviour of tourists for their travel planning and decision making.

2.1 Research Methodology

The research aims to find prominence of social media for destination marketing communication with effective use of user generated content in Madhya Pradesh. It is empirical work that relies on self administered structured questionnaire as a tool for collecting responses along with secondary reviews. The tool is divided in two parts – demographic profile and frequency of using social media and other part reflects their perception about social media to gather information, travel planning and decision making and lastly sharing experience. The survey was conducted during January to February 2023 using google forms shared through social media groups and forums. Likert scale of agreement was used for measuring the responses of a homogeneous sample of millennial (same frequency of using social media) which was analyzed using mean and one way anova in SPSS. The questionnaire was circulated initially among 50 respondents of target population in selected universities of Madhya Pradesh through judgement sampling to check the reliability of the same. The cronbach coefficient value of each factor as examined to check the reliability and construct validity is more than 0.785. The questionnaire was floated through Google forms using snowball sampling technique, of which 168 complete responses were suitable for analysis.

2.2 Findings & Discussion

The demographic findings of the survey reveal, 58.2% respondents consisted of women while majority of respondents (56.4%) are within the age group of 18-25 years. Most respondents are graduates (68.2%) , 71.2% are students and 80.6% are unmarried. Most of the respondents (74) use social media for 2-3 hours in a day. Facebook , Youtube,Whats app and Instagram are among the top rated platforms.

Table 1: Description of the respondents (n=168).

	Category	Frequen cy	Percent age
Gender	Male	71	41.8%
	Female	97	58.2%
Age	18-25 yrs	94	56.4%
	25-32 yrs	64	37.6%
	32-39 yrs	8	6.0%
Education	Graduation	114	68.2%
	Post Graduation	30	17.6%
	Diploma	7	4.2%
	Any other	17	10%
Marital Status	Unmarried	135	80.6%
	Married	33	19.4%
Occupation	Student	119	71.2%
	Service in Govt.	12	7.1%
	Business	13	7.6%
	Service in Pvt.	24	14.1%
Annual Income	< 5 lacs	84	50.6%
	lacs	53	31.1%
	10-15 lacs	20	11.7%
	Above 15 lacs	11	6.5%
Source of Information (Social Media)	Instagram	51	
	Twitter	18	
	Websites	42	
	Facebook	84	
	Whats App groups	58	
	Youtube	91	
Use of Social Media in a day	0-1 hour	9	
	1-2 hours	44	
	2-3 hours	74	
	3 hours and above	41	

The second part comprised of three independent variables social media usage to identify and gather information about destination and activities (3 items), influence of social media on choice of destination and travel planning (3 items) and sharing of experience on social networks during or post travel (4 items) and dependent variable is travel related decision making and behaviour. F test confirms significant relationship (significant value < 0.001) of three independent variables in the construct with dependent variable to

indicate positive influence of social media on travel intention and behaviour on decision making.

3 CONCLUSION

Web 2.0 has been a game changer in revolutionising several industries tourism being one of them. It has gathered momentum with use of internet on smart phones to fill the demand and supply gap. Tourism marketing in recent years has undergone a paradigm shift with strategic use of digital communications to share and disseminate content on highly interactive and engaging virtual networks. Incredible India campaign has been a tremendous success among netizens with huge likes, comments and shares. It was replicated by other states like Goa, Odisha or Madhya Pradesh who have dedicated social media platforms, interactive websites and online forums. Optimizing social networks /platforms along with diverse digital promotional campaigns #SabKuchJoDilChahe. (Patricia et al., 2021), tiger tourism #Buffer mein safar (Vasan, 2018) and post covid 19 #Intezaar Aapka and other interventions by Madhya Pradesh tourism generated high interest among travellers and branding. (Gohil, 2015) Digital communication has empowered all the stakeholders alike to create, share and disperse relevant information in real time cost effectively creating suitable ground for personalised interaction that influence consumer buying behaviour. Strategic social media usage has gathered support on virtual networks leveraging tourism benefits for sustainable environment and community development. Collaboration among public and private destination managers on digital mediums to develop innovative business models will be competent future tool to influence travel behaviour, motivation and decision making of tourists' alike.

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